Met Office

NEWS

Expertise allowing future flight technology to soar

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The Met Office is delighted to be involved in a new project aimed at increasing our understanding of the real life and practical uses of electric and autonomous air vehicles.

The project aims to develop and test a remotely operated drone system for industrial and urban environments and will be led by specialist drone command and control solution developer, sees.ai. The Met Office will work alongside 15 other partners from the aviation and industrial world, including NATS and BAE Systems, providing necessary weather information and guidance to ensure the safe and efficient operations of Unmanned Aircraft Systems.

Commencing next month, a share of £30million for the 16-month project will come from the Future Flight Challenge, Phase 2 competition, part of the Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund (ISCF), delivered by UK Research and Innovation.

The futuristic system, which uses similar technology to autonomous cars, will enable remote inspection and monitoring of industrial sites such as construction and oil and gas, as well as urban sites, such as road & rail telecoms infrastructure and live emergency services support.

Chris Tyson, Autonomous Vehicle Lead at the Met Office, said: “The Met Office is delighted to be involved in this very exciting and forward-looking project. The opportunity to contribute to the development of safe beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) drone operations for real-world applications is a great privilege. Working alongside partners who will operate drones, support their use and benefit from their capabilities establishes great synergies to achieve the safe, efficient and reliable operational services of the future.”

Gary Cutts, Director of the Future Flight Challenge, said: “At this very challenging time for the international aviation industry, it is a great testament to the UK’s drive and ambition that we have had such a strong response to the first funded Future Flight competition.

“The breadth, quality and creativity of the bids has been exceptional and the economic and social benefits offered are very significant. The projects we are now launching will position the UK strongly to drive the third revolution in aviation.”

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